

# LIBERTY AND VOCATE.

WHEN POWERS ARE ASSUMED WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN DELEGATED, A NULLIFICATION OF THE ACT IS THE RIGHTFUL REMEDY.—Jefferson.

GRAVES & SMILEY, EDITORS.

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Correspondence between Gerrit Smith, Esq. of Peterboro', N. Y., and the Rev. William Winans, of Mississippi.

Our readers will recognize in the following correspondence the names of individuals which are familiar to the reading public. Considering their standing before the community in which they live, it would be impertinent in us to make any remarks respecting either of their communications. They speak for themselves.—The correspondence itself contains an account of the history of its introduction and progress. Considering all the circumstances of the case, we have concluded to give both communications an insertion in our columns, which we think, knowing the parties, will not be objectionable to either.—*Christian Advocate & Journal.*

From Zion's Watchman.

## LETTER

FROM G. SMITH, ESQ. OF N. Y. TO THE REV. WM. WINANS, OF MISSISSIPPI.

Dear Sir:—Among the letters received months ago, and unanswered, by reason of unexpected and pressing claims upon my time, is a kind-hearted and interesting one from your pen.

You inform me, that "the Methodist Church have undertaken to erect a large, substantial place of worship" in N. Orleans—and you invite me to share in the expense of erecting it. I have a question to put to you. Suppose I were invited to contribute to the cost of erecting a heathen temple, could I innocently comply with the request? You will promptly answer that I am not at liberty to promote any form of idolatrous worship.

The religion of the south, as you well know, sanctions that code of laws which forbids marriage and reading; which invests hundreds of thousands of petty tyrants with the power of separating husbands from their wives—and which, by means of whippings and various brutal treatment of parents, that it authorizes, make such parents vile and contemptible in the eyes of their children.

The religion of the bible, on the contrary, the religion of the true God enjoins marriage and the searching of the scriptures; commands husbands to dwell with their wives, and commands children to honor their parents. Now, I take it for granted, that the religion which is to be preached in the "place of worship," which you invite me to assist in preparing, is the religion of the south, and I put it to your candor, whether it is not therefore, fairly to be considered an idolatrous "place of worship." You will, of course, admit that the religion preached at the south is not the whole of the true religion. You may not, however, be so ready to admit, that it therefore deserves to be classed with false religions, and its temples with heathen temples. Now I do not say, that the religion of the south is as false as many religions are. I admit that it presents far more of truth than most of them do.—All I insist on is, that it does not set forth the whole testimony of the God of the Bible; and it is therefore to be numbered with false religions, and its chapels with places of idol worship. Let me add, that the true God mutilated is as certainly an idol as any god to which the nations of the east bow down.

It grieves me to know that there are some good men at the north who continue their contributions towards sustaining the religion of the south. In a spirit of misguided fraternal and Christian feeling they yield to solicitations for aid to build southern houses of worship, and endow professorships in southern theological seminaries. They know not what they do. To such solicitations I have myself yielded.—Knowing not what I did, I on one occasion put my hand in my pocket in behalf of the theological seminary at Columbia, S. C.; and now I have the pain of seeing my gift employed in propagating a slave-holding Christianity. In proof that this is the type of the Christianity of that seminary, and that its students cannot be respected, if indeed their persons can be safe, unless they manifest their friendship for slavery, I copy the following article, which was published a few months ago, in the Southern Christian Herald, to allay an excitement against the northern born members of the school, which unchecked, would not improbably have resulted in the lynching of the obnoxious students:—

"At present the number of students is twenty, of whom thirteen are natives of

South Carolina and Georgia, five natives of the northern states, one of the western States, and one of Canada. Of the seven last mentioned, only one came to this institution from the north. But he was not sent here by abolitionists; for he is not only opposed to them in principle, and favorable to (slavery) southern institutions, but he is preparing to leave all that he holds dear in this land, that he may spend his days on heathen shores. With regard to the rest, they came to us from the bosoms of southern families, from southern academies and colleges, from communities violently opposed to the schemes of abolitionists, and they came recommended either by southern presbyteries or southern men. They have never been charged with entertaining sentiments favorable to abolition, and inimical of the south. They now authorize us to contradict all the statements which have been made against them; and further say that they consider their present residence here, together with their former residence, in most instances for several years, in this and other parts of the south a sufficient evidence of their friendly regard to slavery, southern institutions."

I trust, my dear sir, that you will, after having read this letter, excuse me for not sending a contribution toward the erection of the New Orleans chapel.—Much as I should be pleased to gratify the writer of so pleasant and kind a letter, as that you have written to me; and much as I should be gratified in having my white brethren of the south suppose that I cherish towards them a generous and brotherly spirit as strong as that which gained me their good will and praises in the days of my colonization delusion, my conscience nevertheless, will not permit me to comply with your request. So far, indeed, am I from feeling at liberty to comply with it, that I am doubting whether the true God; the God of the Bible; the God of the poor and oppressed, is willing that I should contribute to those benevolent societies which send their agents to the south after a share of the spoils of slavery. These agents are very liable to learn and adopt the religion of the south; the religion which justifies the oppression and murder of the Saviour's poor; and some of them not content with preaching it there return to preach it at the north. That they preach it there is a matter of course; for to preach the whole religion of the Bible there would be not only to defeat the end of their mission to those who persevere in shutting their ears against the 58th chapter of Isaiah, the 22d chapter of Jeremiah, and numberless other portions of the Bible, and who will not give their money, save on the condition that smooth things only are prophesied to them; but to declare the whole of God's testimony south of Mason's and Dixon's line, would be to expose their persons to certain destruction. James G. Birney, who, excepting the beloved sisters, Sarah and Angelina Grimke, is doing more than any other child of the south to promote its safety and best interests, accompanied me a few weeks since, to a village, where we addressed several anti-slavery meetings. Unhappily, an agent of one of our national benevolent societies had been there a few days before with the southern religion upon his lips. Repeatedly did I hear of his apologies for slavery, and of their unhappy influence on those, or at least, some of those, to whom he had made them.

The apostle requires us to "remember them that are in bonds as bound with them;" and if we are to remember them as bound with them ourselves, it follows, as the degree of sympathy for our children is no greater than for ourselves, that we are also to remember them as though our children were bound with them.—Now, could northern men, if their own children were among the plundered ones, be as ready as they now are to send agents after southern plunder? Would they rejoice, as they now do, at the sight of the money with which those agents return laden, if the tears and blood which stain it were the tears and blood of their own children? But I forgot myself: I am writing as if my letter were intended for an abolitionist. That you may soon become one and obey the command, "Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction," is the earnest request of your friend,

GERRIT SMITH.

Peterboro', N. Y., August 7, 1837.

Gerrit Smith, Esquire,

Dear Sir:—I do not consider myself a sufficiently competent judge, in matters of courtesy, to decide upon the propriety, in that respect, of answering a private letter in the columns of a public journal. But my sense of what is due to a correspondent would have rendered it impossible for me to have done so; unless, indeed, there occurred to me no other method of introducing to the public some truth of very great importance. And, as I cannot suppose that you were at any loss for a salient point in your argument against slave-

holders, I cannot reconcile your course in this matter to my views of the consideration which is due from man to man.

I regret that I was so long in seeing your answer to what you are pleased to designate my 'kind-hearted and interesting' letter. It is not two weeks since it found its way to my hands; and then it appeared in the form of a second printed edition. I am not surprised that it was so long in reaching me, though I regret it.—The wonder is that it came at all. Papers, such as the "Friend of Man,"—pardon me for considering this title a gross misnomer—such papers, I say, have no general circulation in this country.—Whatever moral influence such publications may exert in your country, here they are inoperative. And the thousands of dollars which are expended to array a moral power against slavery, are doing nothing where, it seems to me, it can alone be made to exert an influence against it—in the south. Unless it is intended to dismember the south from the Union, by violating the pledges of the constitution on the subject, the vituperations against slavery and slave-holders of the south, in which abolitionists are indulging themselves in the north, have, and can have no tendency to dispose those who alone have any control over the business towards the emancipation aimed at. But to return. I regretted that I was so long in receiving your letter; and was exceedingly surprised that it was in a public form. This was at war with all I had conceived of your disposition and character. In you I expected to find the courtesy of a christian gentleman, and the unstopping dignity of well-taught magnanimity. But your letter has come; and though I, who should, in reason, have been the first, am, perhaps, the fifty thousandth reader of it, I rejoice in being enabled by it at last, to learn the result of my well-intended application to you for aid in planting the Gospel standard in the city of New Orleans.

I readily grant that you would not be obliged, nor even at liberty to assist in erecting a heathen temple in New Orleans: but I am not at all prepared to grant that the religion of the south sanctions any thing whatever, in the code of existing laws or in the institutions of Louisiana, which is incompatible with the doctrines or precepts of the Bible; or that "the religion preached in the south is not the whole of the true religion." I am myself identified with the religion of the south; and I appeal to Heaven that I have for almost twenty-seven years, been preaching the whole of the true religion, to the best of my understanding. It is true that professors of religion in the south may, as professors of religion in the north do, sometimes sanction things which are incongruous to the pure Gospel of Christ; but this no more convicts the religion of the south than it does the religion of the north of either heathenism or imperfection. If men shall hold themselves excused from assisting in building churches, till all who profess religion are orthodox in opinion and upright in practice, they may appropriate their money otherwise till the day of doom. But I will not affect to misunderstand you. You mean to say, I suppose, that the religion of the south sanctions slavery; or at least, that it does not denounce it as criminal. It does, however, just as the Saviour and his apostles did, when they preached the whole of the true religion, in countries where slavery prevailed. It lays down & enforces the same principles, urges the same precepts, denounces the same transgressions, and presents the same inducements which those masters of the true religion did in similar circumstances. It condemns slavery as clearly and as strongly as any one or all those ever did; and it goes no farther towards sanctioning the abuses of slavery than they did. It is this sort of religion for which a sanctuary in New Orleans is contemplated, and for aid in the providing of which I took the liberty of soliciting you; and it is, moreover, such a religion as that which you have assumed the responsibility of pronouncing heathenism in its character.—Would you sir, have met the requisition of St. Paul, to aid in propagating the religion which he taught in Rome, at Ephesus, or at Colosse, by such an excuse as that by which you would vindicate your refusal to contribute to the erection of a Methodist Church in the city of New Orleans? And yet, I assure you, the Gospel it is intended to preach in that church is in extenso and in detail, the same Gospel which that apostle published to those cities.

I leave the theological seminary at Columbia, South Carolina, to determine whether they will not to refund you with interest, the donation you made to that institution, and which you now regret. Were I one of its Trustees, it should not be my fault if that source of your sorrows were not soon dried up. I shall not even pass a judgment on the propriety of the course pursued by the Southern Christian Herald, in publishing the opinions of the five northern born students of that institution, concerning slavery, with a view to quiet the angry passions of the commu-

nity, within which the seminary is situated, and prevent these young men from being martyrs to the abolition doctrines which they manifestly eschewed. The religion of the south is stainless of the guilt of mobbing and lynching. It would deprecate these things, though directed against the most malignant abolitionists, as sincerely as the religion of the north could. It does not appear to me, though you seem to have supposed that the theological seminary approved of the practice of lynching abolitionists, though they did take measures to secure those who were not abolitionists, from all liability to being lynched as such.

If you mean to say that you trust "that I will see displayed in your letter, reasons which justify you for not contributing toward the erection of a New Orleans chapel," you must strangely misconceive of my sincerity, or greatly underrate my understanding poor as it may be. You assume premises which you very well know would not be conceded by any religious man in the south; and from them you conclude against the propriety of the contribution solicited, and then—(I will not characterize the proceeding;) and then you suppose I must see reason, in what you have written, for withholding the contribution. I most certainly had no other claims on you than those created by a bona fide purpose of glorifying God, and advancing the interests of true religion. I presented these claims to you as to one who had both these objects in high regard. Whether you have sacrificed these objects to the interests of an excited and a fanatical association—whether you have been held back from this good work by mistaken apprehensions of the religion of the south—or whether the religion of the south is itself involved in error on this subject, would perhaps as little become me to determine, as it becomes you to determine, as you have done, of the heathenish character, or, at least, mutilated state of the religion of the south.—It is certain, however, that if the religion of the south is such as you represent it, there is a stern and tremendous obligation on you, and such as you, to send and bring the whole of the true religion among us. Many of us, on this supposition are "perishing for lack of knowledge;" and the worst of it is, the Bible itself will not supply this lack to us. We cannot find the character of our religion thus drawn in that sacred book. We must be taught, then; and on such as you it is incumbent to teach us. Come over, then, to our Macedonia, and help us. Think not you have done enough, or, indeed done any thing, while your lectures against southern idolatry and heathenism are confined to northern audiences; who, though they framed our idols and forced them upon us, have themselves cast their idols to the moles and bats, content with the price of iniquity which they have treasured up, in exchange for those they have set upon us. Come, I repeat, or send; that we may be taught the whole of the true religion. In this great work you cannot, certainly, fear that you will repeat the delusion which so long held you in the front rank of colonization advocates, in the best days of your mental vigor! Or would it be too much mercy to us wretched idolatrous heathens, to convert us from the error of our ways, and turn us from our idols to the living God? Why waste the noble energies of mind, and other resources with which Providence has endowed you and your coadjutors, Birney and the beloved sisters Sarah and Angelina Grimke, in lecturing those who are not involved in it, on the sin of Southern idolatry? Or, perhaps I mistake the purpose of your movements. You may be training a band of missionaries for this purpose. If so what is it intended shall be their outfit? Will they come to us with the simple Gospel? Or may we expect the Gospel to be supported by a violated constitution, on the one hand and by a severed union on the other? And will these carry fire and the sword as the cogent arguments by which the whole of the true religion is to be urged upon our voluntary acceptance? If not, why delay the commencement of your preaching the true religion among us in its entirety? Will the Gospel become more efficient by the delay? Or shall we become more disposed to receive it, at your hands, in proportion to the injury which we think you have attempted against us in your denunciatory lectures at the north?

I say nothing in this letter, upon the question of the right or wrong of slavery in the abstract. Every conscientious man that holds slaves must believe that it is right, in the circumstances in which he holds them; and, till he is convinced to the contrary of this, no denunciations upon general principles, much less upon misapplied portions of the Jewish Scriptures, can convince him of sin, or reform him. Many of the religious men of the south believe that in existing circumstances, it is greatly conducive to the well being of the slaves in general, that religious men, and especially, that the ministers of religion, should be known

to be slaveholders. In that character alone can they effectually perform the important service in behalf of the slave, which your benevolence toward me has prompted you to wish I might perform, viz: "to open my mouth for the dumb." I have seen a slaveholding minister of the Gospel do this effectively in behalf of the best interests of the entire colored population of a whole state; while the whole influence exerted by the abolitionists upon the condition and prospects of slaves, is evil and only evil. Its effect is to rivet the fetters of slavery, and to increase the privations and hardships of the slave. You sir, when under your "colonization delusion," did effectually as well as eloquently "open your mouth for the dumb." The burdens of the slave were sensibly lessened by the measures adopted by you and your philanthropic coadjutors in that noblest of human enterprises; and the shackles of many hundreds of slaves were thrown off, and those of thousands of others manifestly loosened by the eloquence of your judicious pleadings in behalf of humanity: but alas! you saw proper to change the one of pleading for that of denunciation; and in a moment, your influence changes sides. The prison doors which had opened at the solicitations of the advocate of colonization, closed with violence before the commands of the abolition lecturer. The mild light of hope, which you had thrown upon the prospect of the prisoner, by your exhibition of Africa's rising sun, was exchanged for the gloom of despair, the moment you taught the black man to look for his freedom and happiness on the soil of the American continent. Did the black man of America understand the scope and bearing of the influence which your recovery from colonization delusion exerts upon his condition, he would, whether free or bond, lament that recovery as the saddest lapse in your moral character which could have acted upon him.—And you, sir, if you could realize the evil influence of that change, upon the condition and prospects of the black man, would, I have no doubt, curse the hour & the instrumentality of that change as heartily as Job ever cursed the hour of his birth, and the man who carried the tidings of that event to his father. To me, as the sincere friend of the black man, and one placed in a position from which I can see the bearing of the influences exerted upon his condition and future prospects, the change which you consider an escape from delusion to truth—from an attitude of hospitality to the interests of the black race, to one of transcendent beneficence to it, appears to be one calling for mourning, lamentation, and we, from every friend of that people; while it, and like changes, afford occasion of exultation and triumph to the ultra slaveholder, as it tends to perpetuate the bondage of the black man, by disgusting the white man against every measure which tends, no matter how remotely, to the accomplishment of his emancipation. Men, and even whole communities, who were fast approximating the point at which they would voluntarily have loosed the fetters of their slaves, and afforded them the opportunity of being free indeed, have been driven by the headlong, and, forgive me for saying it, the incendiary measures of northern abolitionists, to retrace their steps—to add strength to the chains of their bondmen. And Gerrit Smith, Esq., the far-famed philanthropist, the friend of the negro, is an agent of first-rate efficiency in accumulating these evils upon his devoted friends! If such be the operation of his kindness, may Heaven shield him from his enemy!

Be assured, my dear sir, though I had hoped a contribution of from \$500 to \$1000 from you, for the church, whose agent I have the honor to be, my disappointment in meeting a refusal did not excite one half the regret that was occasioned by witnessing what I consider such an instance of mental alienation—for I cannot suppose your moral feelings so perverted—as that which your present course, and especially your letter to me, indicates. You and the sober part of mankind, agreed to consider you as very much in your senses; and most agree that you were making an excellent use of those senses, when you were a leading star in the phalanx of colonization philanthropist. You must not wonder, then, if the sober part of mankind deplore, as the hallucination of frenzy, the strenuous effort you are now making to pull down what you were so long employed in building up; and exclaim, "How is the most fine gold become dim!"

I assure you no ill-natured sentiment toward you has place in my bosom.—True, the unceremonious and, as I think, uncourteous manner in which you have dragged me before the public, and the dogmatical denunciation of the religion of a large community of Christians with whom I am associated, are, in themselves, offenses of no moderate malignity; but then, as I cannot bring myself to believe that your heart was privy to any intention to give offence, I cannot be offended. Fanaticism, when sincere, though guilty of the utmost